

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 SR-02 ORM-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 DRC-01

NSCE-00 /156 W

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R 161010Z NOV 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8732

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

USUN NEW YORK 526

CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 11529

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, CH, HK

SUBJECT: PEKING CURBS EMIGRATION TO HONG KONG

REF: HONG KONG 11148

SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, THE PRC HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO LIMIT LEGAL EMIGRATION TO HONG KONG TO UNDER 100 PER DAY. THE BRITISH ARE PLEASED WITH THIS ACTION BUT HOPE IT CAN BE FURTHER LIMITED TO UNDER 50 PER DAY. END SUMMARY.

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1. HONG KONG NEWSPAPERS TODAY CARRIED REPORTS THAT THE INFLUX OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS INTO HONG KONG FROM THE PRC HAS DROPPED OFF SHARPLY. BEGINNING NOV. 13, THE NUMBER HAS BEEN JUST UNDER 100 PER DAY INSTEAD OF THE 400 TO 600 OF RECENT WEEKS. THE NEWSPAPER STORIES SAY THE PRC HAS CURBED EMIGRANTS INTO THE COLONY IN RESPONSE TO BRITISH REPRESENTATIONS AND THIS HAS RESULTED IN MAJOR BUILDUP OF PERSONS ON THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE BORDER WHO HAD HOPED TO LEAVE BUT WERE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO AT THE LAST MOMENT.

2. HONG KONG ASSISTANT POLITICAL ADVISER TIMOTHY GEORGE, (PROTECT,) CONFIRMED THAT THE RATE HAS INDEED FALLEN TO BELOW 100 A DAY AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE CHINESE DECISION TO RESTRICT THE FLOW WILL CONTINUE. HE SAID THAT IN THE DISCUSSIONS HELD WITH PEKING ON THIS ISSUE, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD PUT FORTH SEVERAL PROPOSALS TO RESTRICT IMMIGRATION INTO THE COLONY. THE CHINESE HAD NOT FORMALLY AGREED TO ANY OF THEM BUT THEY DID EXPRESS "UNDERSTANDING" OF THE PROBLEMS THE INFLUX CREATED FOR HONG KONG. THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS, HOWEVER, CONTINUED TO GO UP UNTIL THE BRITISH UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE ANTHONY ROYLE RAISED THE MATTER WITH THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO LONDON. GEORGE DID NOT PROVIDE SPECIFICS ON THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT HE DID SAY THE QUESTION OF A PRC REPRESENTATIVE IN HONG KONG HAD NOT ARISEN. (HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE U.K. WAS NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET ON THIS ISSUE, IMPLYING THE CHINESE WOULD CONTINUE TO RAISE IT IN OTHER CONTEXTS.) ANOTHER HKG OFFICIAL TOLD NEWSMEN OFF THE RECORD THAT PEKING HAD INDICATED IT WOULD KEEP THE NUMBER OF EMIGRANTS DOWN TO AROUND 100 PER DAY.

3. WHILE PLEASED WITH THE PRC DECISION TO LIMIT EMIGRATION, THE BRITISH FEEL THE NUMBER IS STILL TOO HIGH AND HOPE IT WILL EVENTUALLY BE KEPT BELOW 50 PEOPLE PER DAY. THE MAJOR PROBLEM NOW WOULD SEEM TO BE THE QUESTION OF THE BACKLOG IN CHINA OF PERSONS WHO HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED AN EXIT PERMIT BUT HAVE NOT YET CROSSED THE BORDER. GEORGE SAID THE PRC INFORMED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT THEY COULD NOT REVOKE THESE PERMITS. THE BRITISH DO NOT KNOW HOW LARGE THE BACKLOG MAY NOW BE AND INDEED SUSPECT THAT PEKING ITSELF MAY NOT KNOW. THIS BACKLOG COULD KEEP THE LEVEL OF IMMIGRATION INTO THE COLONY AT A RELATIVELY HIGH LEVEL FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.
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